

Empowering Local Communities

■ Summary



The Council commissions the RE:generate Trust to use a community engagement method called “Listening Matters” in some of our most deprived wards. This is a “bottom up” approach, working closely with local individuals and networks. It seeks to empower communities to work together and with public services to find solutions to local issues.

■ The problems and how we tackled them



In general, Bath and North East Somerset residents have a high quality of life. However, research has identified areas where residents are concerned about crime, anti-social behaviour and issues concerning young people. Residents would like to do more to tackle these concerns, but often do not feel able to confidently influence public services in order to make a real difference.

The “Community Animator” approach was successfully piloted in the Whiteway area of South West Bath and has been extended to the Queens Road area of Keynsham as well as the Snowhill area in Bath. The Community Animator listens to all residents on a one-to-one basis and in small groups to find out about the things that matter to them.

The scheme identifies and works with residents who have the potential to be Community Leaders and the aim is to sustain the project over time.

■ Outcomes and impact



As the Community Animator engages with local people, they begin to champion and become involved in projects designed to improve their local area.

Projects that have emerged as a result of this approach through the Whiteway pilot include reducing fly tipping, a football project with young people, working with the Police to reduce burglary and the establishment of a ‘proud of your doorstep’ campaign to improve the appearance of the area.

Quote from community member who has become involved:
“At first I didn’t believe any of this because all we were doing was putting pen to a piece of paper. But now we are actually starting to do something. It feels like something is going to happen, we just need to believe in ourselves”.

A local elected member has commented on the scheme:
“I think this is a good model of community building and empowerment”.

Since starting the work in Whiteway a network of over 550 people have been listened to, 120 people have been active in coming together to explore as a group their aspirations and visions for the area, 26 projects have been explored and 9 projects have emerged to directly tackle the concerns and realise the visions of the community.

Our equality journey

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